

May 29, 1952

Dear Alain:

I will not apologize for having neglected to write to you, although I have wished to, but I am sorry that I have been remiss in not acknowledging the things you have sent us. We have received in good condition the Winogradsky, the French novels, and ~~xxxxxx~~ L'Observateur. Did you ever get the condensed tea? (What in the world did you want it for?) We have also had the enclosed ~~photographs~~ Kodachrome prints copied, and hope you enjoy them as much as we have.

We are very pleased with the things you sent us, but I must admit we have been so busy that we have not had much time to enjoy them. I would like to see L'Observateur from time to time, but not many issues at once, as they become rather discouraging. We will send you the New-Yorker as you suggested. That little French shop on Gilman street unfortunately closed up a few weeks ago; we were able to pick up a few more of those lovely little saucers during their close-out sale. We see Quin almost as little as you do. He has some special local interests now, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~.

I wish we could travel this summer, but it is not likely. Perhaps next year (there will be both the Microbiology and Genetics congresses in Italy) if we can get some financial aid, and we would not go to Europe, of course, without spending some time in Paris. You do not mention Stanier— have you had a chance to meet him yet. He is working in Monod's group.

Your letter sounds so discouraging— perhaps that is why you wrote. Do you think the importation of new ideas is so vital for a lab. like ~~xxxx~~ Monod et al. ? It may seem to make things more exciting, but I wonder if it leads to the soundest work, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ But if Garches is unstimulating for you, I hope you will be happier if the Pasteur Institute appointment (Shh!) succeeds. I do know what you mean— sometimes I feel that way ~~heax~~. Although Wisconsin has a ~~wide~~ large group of very wide-awake people, there are also many of them asleep, and in my own field I must depend on my own lab for stimulation. Esther and I have been almost frantic getting some papers through for publication, almost all at once there are three on separate subjects. When they are ready, we will of course send you the reprints. Also, Zinder is earning his Ph. D. in a few days, and his thesis was sent to the Jour. Bacteriology not long ago. As if this is not enough, I am in the middle of writing a review that is taking much longer than I expected— on "Genetics, Symbiosis, and the Cell"— I am merely trying to bring together information on symbiosis, latent infection, and similar subjects, and show how such concepts can be reconciled with plasmagenes, etc., for a larger picture of the cell and organism. When this is over, I have another short review to write, with Tatum, on our Sex work for the past ~~six~~ years, and I may be freer then to get back to lab work. Actually, the latter has been more productive lately. We have discovered a system of "mating types", actually something like relative sexuality in E. coli, and I think we are really for the first time getting close to seeing the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ morphological basis of

genetic recombination. So lately, I have been getting into a good deal of cytological study. Nothing very definite yet, but it is very encouraging. Esther, as I said, has also been tied up with literary efforts, but is continuing her lysogenicity study, and is getting in an exciting aspect with interactions of different latent viruses of different strains.

I've already mentioned David Skaar, who is starting serological studies with E. coli. The different crossable strains carry different somatic antigens, and these segregate as unit factors, much like the human blood groups, but the work is in a preliminary stage. With the "transforming" (we prefer to call this "transduction") in *Salmonella*, we are going ahead to study the determination of the flagella antigens. I think I've already mentioned synthesizing a new serotype from *S. typhosa* x *S. typhimurium*. Boulgakov (from the d'Herelle lab. in Paris) sent us some phages whose receptor seems to be the flagella, and these promise to be very useful. It looks as if there are at least two genetic factors for flagellar constitution -- one which determines whether there will be any flagella, the second which determines which antigens it will carry. We had speculated whether the flagella antigens might be self-determining, like those of *Paramecium*, but this is very unlikely. Zinder is leaving soon to go to the Rockefeller Inst. with W. Schneider: in fact most of the lab, is leaving, but some new people will be coming in. Talk about visitors, we are expecting a succession of them. Bruce Stocker will be here in a few days, to stay a couple of ~~days~~ months, and in the Fall, another anglois, C.C. Spicer. Both of them are especially interested in bacterial immunogenetics. We have two systems for this kind of work: the *E. coli* is technically better, but the *Salmonella* is more interesting from other than genetic viewpoints.

There has been so much politics lately here that I find it hard to think about it, now. Ike vs. Taft will be a very close race, from the looks of it. There are going to be some disputes over ~~some~~ which of two state conventions is legal, and the Credentials Committee of the Republican Convention may play a deciding role. Taft is playing a shrewd game, while Ike keeps ~~quiet~~ quiet. I am not at all sure that Taft would win the election even if he gets the nomination. The non-isolationist Republicans probably would not support him, and a Democrat like Harriman who has an aura of stability about him (and a wealthy background!) could beat Taft. Ike has given so little thought to domestic issues that I don't trust him at all on that basis.

We don't feel any better about the remilitarization of West Germany, but I don't think of its acceptance by France as a gesture for Eisenhower's benefit! Do you think it could be avoided in a strong European defense? The important thing is that democratic institutions will control the army, whether in Germany or in France. It is obvious that the Germans are playing the East and West against each other, but we have to make the best of it. If France had backed out at this, it might have hurt Ike's political prestige, but the peace contract is not the important single thing you make it out to be: it is only the least that would be expected of the Great International Conciliator that Ike is supposed to be. It is hard to see how this can have any peaceful ending-- we can only hope to postpone the conflict until something we do not foresee now will help to resolve it. That is, like most Americans we pay our taxes, and try not to think too much of the future. But a year ago, we were not sure that peace would survive this long, so perhaps we should be grateful even for that.

We are having a lovely Spring so far, with many high-barometric-pressure days with cool dry air and warm sun. (the humidity and heat will come later). This is much better for people than for our corn crop!

Sincerely,